



ART

# EMOTIONS INTO ART

His paintings decorate walls across the Middle East and around the world, bringing to life a unique story in each home. Renowned Lebanese artist **Georges Bassil** gives us a peek into his creative world, where love always prevails through the darkness.





**D**escribe your style as an artist. Is there a recurring theme in your work?

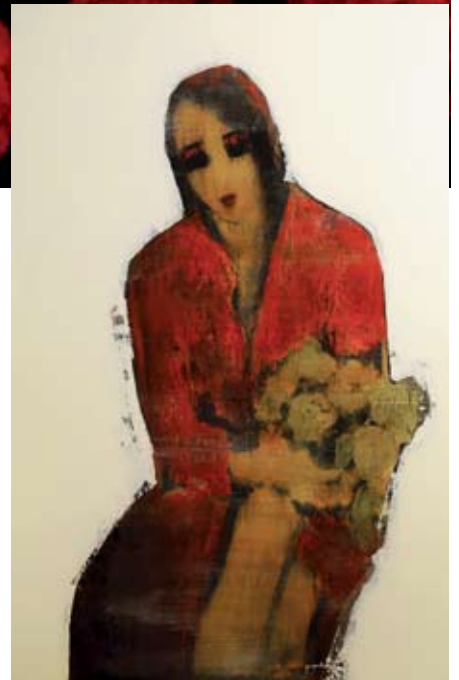
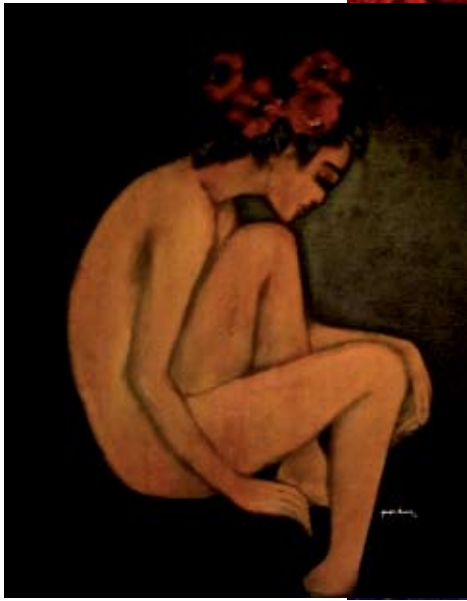
My style is slightly expressionist. I like to focus on and capture human figures and their emotions. I keep the background simple because, to me, it is irrelevant; the most important thing is the figure. In my most recent work, I have featured a blossoming red flower, a symbol of blooming hope, love, and peace.

**Describe your state of mind when you paint.**

When I paint, that is all I think about; I just focus on whatever it is that I am feeling in that moment and on my tools. My art is my sacred place where I can express myself.

**A lot of your paintings seem to exude an element of darkness; does this in any way represent your real life?**

The darkness in my paintings is not a representation of a darkened spirit or mind — it is actually there to highlight that which is not dark. My figures are always lighter than their backgrounds; it is to shine the spotlight on them rather than to denote any darkness in them. If there is ever a dark element, it is in their environment, and they are the light and hope that shines through.



**You also seem to paint many women. What is it about the female form that fascinates you?**

I am more concerned with the human figure rather than solely the female form, although I do paint females more often than males.

**What is the inspiration behind your latest collection, “Love in a Time of Darkness?”**

In “Love in a Time of Darkness,” I sought to create my own world on canvas, taking the stories and faces I see and capturing them in the beautifying light of the artist’s gaze. I hate the current situation in the world, with society becoming more and more extreme, so I turn to my work to create something different, more positive. I draw people, love, and flowers, and this is something I insist on doing.

**Your latest collection has some pieces featuring an androgynous identity. What is the message behind that?**

When it comes to my figures, I am not trying to portray gender; it is more about the human figure. Gender rarely plays into my work, for the most part. No one

has really commented on the fact that some are androgynous looking, and we are lucky that we are now in a time when people are more exposed, so there is less of a shock factor.

**What was the most meaningful painting you have ever created? What is the story behind it?**

That’s a very hard question, almost like asking a parent who is their favorite child. I love all my works. There are pieces that I like more than others, that’s for sure, but as for which is the most meaningful, I can’t choose. Each individual painting is a piece of me; they were created at different points in my life and reflect different emotions and experiences, but I hold each in equal regard.

**Do you ever get creative blocks? If you do, what do you do to ignite your imagination?**

Yes, of course, there are many times when I don’t have the energy, or mental or physical ability, to work. Though I am constantly thinking about my work and looking for inspiration, sometimes I just can’t force it. I find that the best cure is to live my life, see my friends,

and enjoy myself, then eventually the block just goes away.

**How would you like your paintings to influence people? What message would you like to leave behind as an artist?**

The most important reaction would be for someone to feel with the painting, to feel engaged and feel like the artwork is alive, that the viewer is living an experience with someone rather than just looking at a figure on a canvas. ■